



**TRANSCRIPT OF RICK WARREN SPEECH
TO ANGLICAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
June 23, 2009**

When you cross the difficult rivers, they will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire you will not be burned. They will not consume you. [break] Since you are precious, and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give up others in exchange for you. Verse 5: So do not be afraid I am with you. I will bring your children from the East, and gather you from the West, and I will say to the North give them up and to the South to hold them back. Bring all my sons and daughters from the ends of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, those whom I created for my glory. Verse 10: You, you, you are my witnesses, declares the Lord, you are my servant whom I have chosen. Before me no God was ever formed, nor will there ever be anyone after me, as I am the Lord and apart from me there is no Savior. Verse 12: You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, and no one can deliver out of my hand, when I act, who can reverse it? And then verse 18: Forget, the former things. Do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing. It is now springing up. Do you not perceive it?" The Word of the Lord.

God loves to create new things. He loves to create new things. The Bible says His mercies are new every morning. The Bible tells us He makes all things new. The Bible tells us one day there will be a new heaven and a new earth. The Bible says if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

He loves to create new things. Now, of course, there are some things that never change. God's character never changes. God's word never changes. God's love for you never changes. Our faith is unchanging. The Bible says in the book of Jude, "it is the faith, once delivered for the saints." It is one time delivered, it is unchanging. We have an unchanging message in a constantly changing world. And so there are some things that never change but everything that is man made eventually wears out. Everything that is man made eventually wears out. And Jesus said it like this, "We must put new wine in new wine skins."

I want to sum up everything I would like to say to you this morning in a simple sentence. A great commitment to the great commandment and the great commission will grow a great communion. Now that's true in every area of life. It's true of a local parish. A great commitment to the great commandment and the great commission will grow a great church, it will grow a great Christian. It will grow a great country. It will grow a great communion. It would grow a great company.

One day Jesus was walking down the street and a guy comes up to Him and says, "Lord, what's the most important commandment?" And Jesus says, "Ok, I'm gonna sum up the entire Bible, all the law of the prophets, I'm going to give you Cliff Notes on the Bible. Here it is: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. Oh, and by the way, love your neighbor as yourself." It's all about love. And then He said, "Go into all the world and make disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have commanded you. Lo, I am with you always."

From the great commandment and the great commission we get five purposes of the church. Not four, not three, not two, we get five. And if your church will build on the great commandment and the great commission, you will be doing what the Father wants us to do. First, He says love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. There's a word for that: worship. Worship is expressing our love to God. Anytime you are expressing love to God, you are worshipping. Doesn't matter if you are one person, fifty people or five-hundred people, worship is expressing my love to God. And I have to love God with all my heart. And the Bible says "worship the Lord your God and Him also thou shalt serve." Worship always comes before service. We are a worshipping people.

And then He says, "Oh, love your neighbor as yourself." The word for that in the Bible is ministry. Jesus said, "Even if you give a cup of cold water in my name, it counts." We are to serve, and we are to worship. We are to love God with all our heart, that's worship. We are to love our neighbor as our self, that's service. Jesus said, "I didn't come to be served but to serve, and to give my life." And that's what following Christ is all about, to serve and give our lives.

And then in the great commission, He gives us three more purposes. Go and make disciples, evangelism. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Bring them into the body of Christ, bring them into the fellowship. We are to make disciples and we are to mark disciples into the fellowship of God's family.

And then we are to mature disciples. "And teach them to do everything I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always." That's discipleship.

So we worship, we minister, we evangelize, we fellowship, we disciple. This is our calling. This is what God has called us to do.

If you want God's blessing on your life, if you want God's blessing on your parish, if you want God's blessing on your communion, don't pray, "God bless what we are doing." Instead, pray, "God help us to do what You are blessing."

We don't say, "God, we want You to bless us while we do something." No, no, no, we say, "God, help us to do what You are blessing in the World." Now what is God blessing? When His church worships, and fellowships, and evangelizes, and disciples, and ministers.

If I had to sum up everything, and my heart is so full for you today, if I had to summarize everything I want to say, I would say it in these three sentences. If God is going to bless the Anglican Church of North America, and I know he wants to do this, we must do three things. [break]

I am the son of a pastor, and a grandson, and a great grandson of a pastor. Now, I've often wondered when I was growing up, "How does John 3:16, 'God has so loved the world,' contradict what the Bible says in I John?". What about in I John where the Bible says, "Love not the world." The Bible tells, "God so loved the world," and then in I John we're told "don't love the world."

The difference is the meaning of the word "world." In John 3:16 Jesus is talking about the people of the world. In I John, John is talking about the value system of the world. We are to love the people of the world, no matter what they believe. We are not to love the value system of the world. And the problem today is that a lot of Christians are getting that reversed. They love the value system and hate the people.

God has never made a person He doesn't love. God has never made a person He doesn't have a purpose for. God has never made a person that He didn't send Jesus to die on the cross. If you want to know how much God loves people, look at the cross. With outstretched arms and nail-pierced hands, Jesus is saying, "This much, this much. This is how much I love the world, this is how much I love people. I love the world so much it hurts. I love the world so much I'd rather die than live without it." And every drop of blood that fell from the cross was saying, "I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you." If we want the blessing of God, we must care about what God cares about most. The dearest thing to the heart of God is the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. And the second dearest thing to the heart of God is for that message to be taken to all His children, because God wants His lost children found.

It is amazing when you think about the Father's perspective. God, the Bible tells us, created the entire universe just so He could create this galaxy. Just so He could create planet Earth. Just so it could rotate at just the right degree to sustain human life. One degree tilted this way on our axis, and we would burn up, and one degree that way, we would freeze up. It is amazing how it sustains human life, just so He could create the human race. Just so He could create you. Just so He could love you.

The Bible says "before the foundation of the world I had you in my mind." God created the universe because He wanted a family. That's the Father's

perspective, God wanted a family. It says from the beginning of time it has always been God's plan to adopt us into His family. Now God didn't need us -- He wasn't lonely. God has always been in relationship in the Trinity -- Father, Son, Holy Spirit. God is love.

But if you want to know why you were created, why everybody else was created. You were created as an object of God's love. The reason you will take your next breath, the reason your heart is beating, is because God has chosen to love you. And if God didn't love you, you wouldn't be taking your next breath, your heart would not be beating. Everything in your life, everything in my life is a gift of God's love. And God wants a family. If we want God's blessing on ACNA, then we must make God's agenda our agenda.

And God's agenda is He is building a family. In fact, that family, which is the Church, is the only thing that is going to last. One day, there won't be an earth, one day there won't be a heaven. God says He going to create a new heaven and a new earth. But the Church, God's family, is going on forever and ever and ever and ever. And if God has called you to serve in a local church, as a parish priest, as a lay leader, or in any other capacity, staff member, whatever, don't you ever step down to become the President of the United States, or anything else for that matter. Nothing matters as much.

Let me tell you about my priest friends here today. You guys, nothing matters more than what you are doing. The privilege of guiding and guarding and shaping and sharing the flock of God, God has put His children under your care, nothing is more important than that. If I knew a more important thing to do with my life than to bring people to Jesus Christ, build them up to spiritual maturity, train them and release them out for ministry and send them out on their own. If I knew a more important thing to do with my life, I would be doing it. Because I decided a long time ago that I'm not going to waste my life, and I haven't. There are a lot of things we can do in our lives that aren't going to matter five minutes from now, or five days from now or five years from now. But when you are helping the Church worship, and fellowship, and disciple, and minister, and evangelize, you are doing something of eternal significance.

Bishop Bob, or should I say now Archbishop Bob, my dear friend, and I were talking. I was telling him about how in April we were really having a spiritual revival. In a period of about nineteen days, we had over 3,000 people come to Christ, baptized over 1,200 new believers, and had a membership class on one day that had over 2,600 people in it. A monthly membership class, that every month for over 30 years has usually about 100 -- had over 2,600 in April. I looked at that and I thought, "What is God doing here?"

Here's what God wants to do, God wants to fill your church with new believers. But when God has a bunch of new babies, He wants to bring into His family, He looks for the warmest incubator He can find. Do you know why God

gave us 2,600 new believers at Saddleback? Because we were ready for them, we were prepared, we could follow them up, we had a system, we had a process by which we move them to maturity. God knew we were ready for them. God, His heart, His passion -- our Father's perspective is He wants everybody to know Him. The Bible says, "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Some people look at large churches like Saddleback and think, "Well, how big should a church get?" That's the wrong question, that's irrelevant. The right question is, "Should anybody be left behind?" We don't grow because we want a big church, we grow because people need the Lord. We grow because Christ died for all. The church that doesn't want to grow, excuse my language, is saying to the World, "You can go to hell."

It takes unselfish people to have the Father's perspective. It takes unselfish people to say, "We're willing to go to multiple services, we're willing to park long distances, we're willing to move." I love that fact that we are in a tent. Saddleback was in a tent for three years. We called it the "canvas cathedral."

I started Saddleback church in my home, with one person -- my wife, Kate. I was 25 years old, I preached my first sermon, she thought it was too long, and it's been downhill ever since. Over the next 13 years Saddleback used 79 different locations. We moved from church, to house, to school, to another school, to tent, to the park, the stadium, the bank building. We used 79 different buildings in the first 13 years of our church. I used to always tell people, this is church that if you can figure out where we are this week, then you get to come. We only want really intelligent people in our church so we keep changing the location.

Some of you remember when we had the Hope for the Future conference in Pittsburgh, and I told some of the churches -- and this actually came true with some of you -- I said, "You may lose the steeple, but you won't lose the people." And the church has never been a building, never. Christ did not die for property.

Not only must we have the Father's perspective on the world, which is "God so loved the world." "Everybody needs Jesus." I mean, sometimes you hear these people say, "We want quality not quantity." Ok, how many of you were not the first born child in your homes? Raise your hands. What if your parents had said, "Let's just stop with the one quality kid. We want quality, not quantity, in our family." You wouldn't be around. I don't know.

Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men." When I go fishing I want both -- want quality and quantity. I want to catch as many fish as I can, and I want them to be as big as they can. There is not contradiction between quantity and quality. In fact, quality produces quantity. People want to go to a church where

the Word is being taught. And quality, vital teaching and quality worship, and quality Eucharist, and quality programs and on and on and on.

So we have to have the perspective of the Father, but we've got to have more than that. We must follow the pattern of the Son, Jesus, who not only died for our sins, He gave us the model for ministry. And he said, "I have given you an example, now do as I have done to you."

And the problem in most churches today, most Protestant churches today, is that we have moved away from the Jesus model of ministry on how to build disciples. Now, I thought about this a lot growing up, I worried about spiritual maturity in my church. I don't know if you have noticed this or not, but I noticed this growing up, that a person could be a member of a church 20, 30, 40 years and never be spiritually mature, never grow up. They could be in a church for 20, 30, 40 years and still be cranky, carnal, gossip, attacking the priest, be manipulative, jealous, envious. How could somebody be in church for 20, 30, 40 years and still be carnal? Never really grow up?

Well, I learned something pretty quickly. It takes more than sermons to grow people to maturity -- it does, it does. We have to follow the Jesus model. Now here's why. The United States Air force did a study and discovered that we forget 90 to 95 percent of everything we hear within 72 hours. Now if you want a statistic to really depress the average pastor, that's it. Because you work really hard trying to prepare your sermon, your homily, your message, on the weekend, knowing that by Wednesday, they will have forgotten all but five percent. Now think about this, the people who have heard you preach for twenty years, they only remember five percent of it. That's discouraging. That's discouraging.

But Jesus did much more than preach sermons. He discipled -- now follow me on this -- Jesus loved everyone, there was no one He didn't love. He fed 5,000, trained the 70, discipled 12, and He mentored three. Let me say this again, He loved everybody, He fed 5,000, the crowds, trained the 70, but discipled 12 and mentored three. Only Peter, James, and John got to go to the Garden of Gethsemane. Only Peter, James, and John got to go up on the Mount of Transfiguration. Only Peter, James, and John got to see Peter's mother be healed. Was Jesus playing favorites? Yes He was. He was investing the maximum amount of time into those who would bear the maximum amount of responsibility.

And later, in Galatians, Paul calls Peter, James, and John (that's a different "James") the pillars of the church. Did it work? Yes, we're all here. Ok, we're all here. So obviously, Jesus ministry worked. Now here's the problem, Jesus' ministry was incarnational, it was intentional, it was incremental and it was seasonal. Jesus started with 12 disciples, and for three years He moved them through a consistent, systematic, structured, developmental process. We know, as any parent knows, that every baby goes through a developmental process

physically. Now we're all different, but we all go through the same process. You breathe before you learn to eat, you learn to eat before you learn to walk and talk.

...I can tell who the "come-and-seers" are at Saddleback, they come in the back and sit by the exits, so that if it gets a little scary in there, they can skip out pretty quick. And that's a good thing -- you have to have an open door funnel -- come and see. The problem is a lot of churches leave them there and they don't take them through the process of discipleship. Over the next three-and-a-half years Jesus consistently turned up the heat, the dial, and He kept requiring more and more of the disciples. And He kept saying, "You are my disciple if ...," And then He would redefine it. He starts off with a simple come and see, nothing required, just come and see. But over time He starts saying things like, "You are my disciple if... you bear fruit, you are my disciple if... you love each other, you are my disciple if ...you continue in my work." Over and over, He starts turning up the heat, defining what it means to follow Christ. Until finally, near the end, He says, "You are my disciple if you take up your cross and deny yourself and follow me."

Now, we don't understand that verse because when He says, "take up your cross," to us a cross is that little symbol we wear around our neck. In those days, no one picked up a cross unless the Romans were going to nail them to it. So what Jesus is saying there is come and die. Now would you agree that there is a big difference between "come and see" and "come and die?" There's quite a spectrum of maturity between come and see and come and die. In fact, at one point, Jesus turns around to the crowd and says, "If you want to follow me you have to eat my flesh and drink my blood." And the people go, "Ehhh. That sounds yucky." And actually it says that, "Many people followed him no more because his words were too hard." They didn't have the slightest idea of what He was saying with that. And they stopped following. In fact, Jesus turns around and says to the 12, "You guys gonna leave too?" And they say, "Well, no Lord, where are we gonna go? You got the Words of Life. Where else can we go? We don't have any alternative. We're gonna follow you."

Now, there is a big difference, as I said, between "come and see" and "eat my flesh and drink my blood." Now here is the problem of most churches, and I hope the Anglican Church of North America can avoid either extreme. Most churches tend to go to one or the other pole. There are "come and see" churches that do a great job of bringing in unbelievers, of attracting the community, of attracting a crowd. That's a good thing. Now a crowd is not a church. A crowd could be turned into a church if you use the Jesus model of discipleship. But a crowd is not a church. I can show you how to get a crowd, but a crowd is not a church. But come and see, there's some people who get them in the front door but that's it. They never get in deeper. They don't move them to maturity, they don't move them to ministry, they don't move them to mission.

On the other hand, there are churches in the other extreme that are “come and die” churches. It’s all about the core. We’re going to make everybody really radical disciples of Jesus Christ. Come and die. But nobody is getting saved, nobody is coming in the front door. The Jesus model, the Jesus parable, pattern is all of it, bring them through the stages of maturity.

And actually, if you study the ministry of Jesus, there are eight laws of spiritual growth that we find in His life, I don’t have time to get into those laws today. But one of them is incremental -- it takes time. And another one of them is incarnational. You have to do it, the Word must become flesh. Discipleship is not a program, it is person-to-person. We must, if we want to be all that God wants us to be, and if the ACNA wants to be all God wants it to be, and be blessed by God -- you must get the Father’s perspective. God loves everybody and He wants everybody to know him. And that is the passion of our heart and when we bleed for that, God honors it. But we don’t just win them to Christ, we must disciple them according to the pattern of Jesus Christ and we must move them deeper and deeper into the Word of God and that takes more than sermons, it takes doing the process that Jesus did.

There’s a third thing we have to do. We have to appropriate the power of God’s spirit. “Unless the Lord builds a house, they labor in vain who built it, it is not by might or by power but by spirit, so says the Lord.” It is interesting to me that after Jesus rose, you know, before His ascension in Acts chapter one, the disciples come to Jesus with a prophecy question. “Lord, when are you going to restore Israel? When are you going to restore Israel?” And they were asking Him about the second coming, they were asking Him about the prophesy.

And Jesus says this, “It is not for you to know the times nor the seasons.” In other words, it’s none of your business.” It is not for you to know the times or the season. But,” He says, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end-most parts of the world.” Interesting, the disciples want to talk about prophesy, Jesus wants to talk about evangelism. You’re probably not a prophesy buff, if you are fine, but let me just say this, Jesus said, “No man knows the day or the hour, not the Angels, neither the Son, but only the Father which is in heaven.” Jesus said, “I don’t even know, only the Father which is in heaven.”

So how in the world am I going to figure that out if Jesus didn’t know. Instead Jesus says, “That’s not for you to know the times, but you will receive power and you will be witnesses.” Why is Jesus talking about evangelism when they want to talk about what’s going to happen in the future? Because He has already said, “Here’s the sign, this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached into all the world, into all nations, and then the end shall come.” So if you want the Lord to come back, just get out and start sharing. Because He’s not coming back until everyone here has had a chance to hear and respond -- and the moment

that last person steps across the line into the family of God, bam it's over. We're out of here.

God is building a family. That family will last forever. That family is the Church of God. If you want to know how much God loves the Church, the Bible tells us in Ephesians, "Christ died for the Church." That's how much it matters. When I hear people say, "Well, I love Jesus but I don't need the Church," it tells me they are extremely immature. Because the more mature you grow in Christ, the more you love the bride of Christ. If I were to say to you, "I like you, I just can't stand your wife," you would be offended. Or if I were to say to you, "I like you but you've got an ugly body," you'd be offended. The Church is the body, the bride of Christ.

So what I'm saying to you this morning is that what you are doing is of utmost importance. Nothing matters more. You need to understand that when you see me out dealing with other groups or other people, talking to leaders or politicians or business leaders, I have no interest in politics. Really, zero. Why? Jesus didn't die to save America, He died to save Americans. If I thought you could change hearts through laws, I would be a politician. But I happen to know you don't change any hearts through politics. But what do I do? I go out to any group whether it's medical or academic or political or social or Hollywood or whatever. You need to understand, I have one motive. It is to build a bridge of love between my heart and theirs so Jesus can walk across. That's it, that's what God wants you to do.

You know my father was a pastor. He never pastored a church of over 100, 125 people in his entire lifetime. He was a church planter -- started many, many small churches, would build them up to about 70, 75 and then turn them over to somebody else. My dad was an average preacher but he was an outstanding builder, He was a carpenter. He loved to build. In my dad's lifetime, he built over 150 church buildings around the world. All by taking volunteer teams with him and traveling to places like Iraq, and Guatemala, and Australia, and the North Pole, and Russia, and Siberia. All around and even into his late 70's, I have pictures of him on the rooftops of churches in Siberia building small churches for congregations around the world.

A number of years ago, my dad got cancer and died. And in the days before he died, the cancer began to affect his brain. And the last week of his life, my dad began to dream aloud. And he would talk about the things he was dreaming almost 24 hours a day. He was in this dream-like state 24 hours a day. And when we had him at home, at my sister's home, for his final days I sat there by my father's bed the final week of my father's life, listening to my father dream. And you know you can learn a lot about people by listening to their dreams. And in all that time it was interesting to me that my father never mentioned any books that he read. He never talked about any movies he went to. He never talked

about his favorite hobby or sport, which was fishing, which he dearly loved. He didn't talk about being a war hero in World War II and the South Pacific.

What my dad dreamed of was building churches. And I could hear him over and over telling, "Now make sure that lumber gets over to that place. Make sure the team gets back here at lunch. Make sure you're wiring that, watch out, make sure the electricity is off. And have those joints fixed together." He just dreamed aloud building churches.

About a day before he died I was sitting in his room with my niece, Elisa, and my wife, Kay. And all of a sudden my dad became very agitated and he started trying to get out of bed. Now he had lost tons of weight from the cancer, very frail. And he tried to get out of bed and my wife said, "Jimmy you have to lay down, whatever you need I'll bring it to you, you can't get up, let me bring it to you." My dad was very, very persistent he kept trying to get out of bed and trying to get out of bed and my wife said, "Jimmy, you're ill, you can't get out of bed. Whatever you need let me get it for you and we'll bring it to you." And my dad just kept trying to get out of bed, get out of bed, get out of bed.

Finally, my wife said, "Jimmy, you're dying. You can not get out of bed. What do you want?" And my dad said, "Gotta save one more for Jesus. Gotta save one more for Jesus. Gotta save one more for Jesus." He began to repeat this over and over and over and over. "One more for Jesus, one more for Jesus, one more for Jesus." I'm not exaggerating when I say he probably, in the next hour, said it 150 times. "One more for Jesus, one more for Jesus, one more for Jesus. Gotta reach one more for Jesus." And I sat there by my father's bed, tears were coming down my eyes, as I thought about the heritage my father had given me, and how grateful I was for a father like that. And with my head bowed, my father reached up and put his hand, his frail hand, on my head, like a blessing. And he said, "Reach one more for Jesus. Reach one more for Jesus." I intend for that to be the theme of the rest of my life.

Because it's what Christ died for. It's why Jesus came to earth. It's why God created the planet. He wanted a family. It's why the Holy Spirit indwells our hearts. Friends, in the next 365 days, 235,000 Californians, in my state, will die, 235,000. And most of them will go into eternity without hope. In the next 365 days, 2.3 million Americans will die, and most of them will go into a Christ-less eternity. In the next 365 days, 54 million people will die, and most of them, without the hope of the Good News. Is there going to be anybody in heaven because of you?

God has not called the Anglican Churches of North America to be a reactionary group. In the first place you didn't leave them. Our Purpose Driven Network works with Anglican churches all around the world, and the 80-million-member communion. Some of my dearest friends are Archbishop Nzimbi, who

spoke to you, Akinola, Urumbi, Kolini and these lions of Africa that I have such great, great respect for.

God is calling you out because He is calling you to a great commitment to the great commandment and the great commission which will grow a great communion.

Let me pray for you, bow your heads with me.

Heavenly Father,

If we just do it Your way, we will have Your blessing. We will get the Father's perspective, and the Son's pattern, and the Spirit's power. We will see a new day of revival, renewal, reformation.

Father, we know it's time to stop debating the Bible and start doing it. We know it's time to stop criticizing and start cooperating. For the Church to be known by love and not legalism. It's time for us to be known by what we are for and not what we are against. It's time for us to be known as the Church.

And I pray that You would use this new communion in a new reformation, to go and make disciples through global missions. To love God with all our heart through passionate worship. To love their neighbors as themselves through compassionate service. To baptize people into the body of Christ through authentic fellowship. And to teach them to do everything you have demanded of us through costly discipleship.

Father, we know there is no greater cause on earth than Your Kingdom. Help each of us to ask whose kingdom we are living for, help us to seek first Your Kingdom, and Your righteousness, and all these other things will be added unto us. Help us to do what You called us to do, to be what You called us to be. And to be driven not by society, or tradition, or the past or by hurts, but to be driven by Your glory, and Your purpose, and Your power.

I pray Your blessing on all these dear brothers and sisters. When they feel like giving up, give them Your encouragement. When they feel discouraged and depressed, lift their spirits. When they feel tired, give them new energy to soar on wings of eagles, to run and not grow weary, to walk and not faint.

Help them to live for an audience of One, to not care what other people say. But to live for the day when they stand before You to hear You say, "Well done good and faithful servant."

I pray You would bless every parish priest, every staff minister, every lay leader, every member, with Your blessing of love, of grace, of forgiveness and a new sense of purpose. And I pray this blessing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.